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To the members of the Appropriations Committee: Thank you for doing the hard work of considering **EVERYONE** as you listen and legislate this session.

I am here in honor of and in memory of my Mom, Lenore Gundersheimer, who passed away on December 29<sup>th</sup>, one day short of her 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday! Mom was #677834 in DSS category 2 of the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders. She was **grateful** to be “a number” in this program.

Mom was a retired High School English teacher, a WWII communications officer in the Navy Waves, and a devoted UConn Husky fan in her adopted state of Connecticut, doing the opposite of most people and leaving Florida with my father to be here near our family for the last 3<sup>rd</sup> of her life.

After my father passed away, my Mom asked me to do only one thing for her: **to HELP her stay in her own home as she aged.**

Fortunately, thanks to her FLA teacher’s pension, some savings, Social Security and a careful lifestyle, she remained independent, in a senior apartment, until a stroke at 85. Though she recovered remarkably, it was at that point that the Home Care Program helped me keep my promise to Mom. She had 37 hours of care a week-thankfully becoming her “number” in this vital program. Together, we provided for the rest of her needs.

The math of the matter before us today is that if she were still alive, her Program co-pay would go from 7% to 15%. In real dollars to us, that means a \$190/month bill would now be \$407! I would be telling Mom this is the year that a nursing home is our only option. And for many other Moms and Dads in our state, this and other Program eligibility changes, mean a nursing home would be their **ONLY** option.

**Now, how would that ultimately save money, in this year or any other?** Please consider the overall financial calamity, along with the colossal quality of life impact, of this proposed budget **CHOICE. Please reject the misguided cuts in the CT Home Care Program for Elders.** Thank you.

*Michelle Souza*